

SIDEWALK CHALK FAITH

John 4:43-54



SYNOPSIS

Sidewalk chalk looks beautiful when the sun shines but washes away when the rain falls. Jesus's encounter with the royal official in Cana highlights a warning against superficial belief and the fullness/completeness (symbolized by "7") of his grace. The royal official took Jesus at his word. Do we?



OUTLINE

1

JESUS WARNS US NOT TO BE CONTENT WITH SUPERFICIAL BELIEF

After a pit stop in Samaria, he returned to his home in Galilee where, previously, he couldn't minister and was almost killed due to the unbelief/contempt of his "homies". (Matt 13:54-57; Luke 4:24-29) This time, they welcomed him, but Jesus knew that people weren't to be trusted, especially people whose only motivation for belief was witnessing the signs he performed in Jerusalem. (John 2:23-25) Perhaps they saw him as a spiritual vending machine of miracles. Through his conversation with the royal official, Jesus warned against conditional faith. "Unless you people see signs and wonders...you will never believe." (John 4:48)

How did our own walks with Jesus begin? Was the motivation consumeristic? Were our hearts thorny soil (worldly worries choke faith) or rocky soil (our faith never developed deep roots)? Is our faith today still sidewalk chalk?

If we don't cultivate our relationship with God, we won't continue to believe when the rain falls.

2

JESUS GRACIOUSLY OVER-MEETS OUR NEEDS

The royal official spoke reverentially to Jesus. His plea for help was essentially a prayer, implying his recognition of Jesus as one who had authority and power to heal. He was earnest and humble. When Jesus declared that his son would be healed, "the man took Jesus at his word and departed." (John 4:50)

This story reminds us to fix our eyes on Jesus. (Heb 12:2) John highlights Jesus as the giver of life, the perfect God-man who expresses his divinity in making things happen solely by his spoken word. The royal official recognized this too and believed. John goes out of his way to note that the healing took place at the 7th hour, emphasizing completion/fullness.

For people facing a crossroads or crisis of belief, are you able to take Jesus at his word? When he says in Ps 46:1 that he is our ever-present help in trouble, can we believe him? Chalk and memories fade, but the Word of God endures forever. May his Word be etched onto our hearts. As we go through darkness and trials, this dark can still be glorious.

Take Jesus at his word. Experience the reality that he is more than enough and gives more than we ask for. The official's son was healed, but the official also found life as his whole household believed.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

How did your walk with Jesus begin? What was the motivation? What is the motivation today?

2

"Unless you people ___, you will never believe." What might reveal the sidewalk-chalkiness of your faith?

3

What does cultivating your relationship with God look like? What is needed to continue that cultivation?

4

How do you see Jesus? What is it about your perception of him that makes his word trustworthy or not for you?

5

What is something the Lord has spoken that you can practice trusting/taking at his word?



BIG IDEA

Even as Jesus knows our faith starts with superficial, consumeristic motivations, he invites us to keep experiencing him. He graciously over-meets our needs, and his word can be trusted.

